

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Withdrawn) A computer-implemented method for enabling perception of multiple online personas in an instant messaging communications session, the method comprising:
  - identifying at least two identities within a communications environment to whom messages may be directed; and
  - enabling a first persona of a user to be projected to a first of the identities while enabling a second persona of the same user to be concurrently projected to a second of the identities, wherein:
    - the first and second personas each comprise an avatar capable of being animated, and
    - the first persona and the second persona differ.
2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the first persona differs from the second persona such that first persona invokes a different avatar than an avatar invoked by the second persona.
3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein:
  - the first persona invokes a first avatar,
  - the second persona invokes a second avatar,
  - the first avatar and the second avatar are the same avatar, and
  - an animation associated with the first avatar is different from animations associated with the second avatar.

4. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein:  
the first persona invokes a first avatar,  
the second persona invokes a second avatar,  
the first avatar and the second avatar are the same avatar, and  
an appearance associated with the first avatar is different from appearances associated with the second avatar.
5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the avatars comprises an avatar that is associated with multiple sounds.
6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the avatars comprises an avatar capable of being animated persona based on text of a message sent in the instant message communications session.
7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the avatars comprises an avatar capable of being animated to send an out-of-band communication.
8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising associating the first persona with a first group of identities so that the first persona is projected in communications sessions with members of the first group of identities.
9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8 further comprising associating the second persona with a second group of identities so that the second persona is projected in communications sessions with members of the second group of identities.
10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising associating a persona with the first of the identities and associating a different persona with a group of the identities

with which the first of the identities is associated, wherein the first persona projected to the first of the identities comprises an amalgamation of the persona associated with the first of the identities and the different persona associated with the group of the identities.

11. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10 wherein the persona associated with the first of the identities overrides the different persona associated with the group of the identities to the extent a conflict exists.

12. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable medium or propagated signal having embodied thereon a computer program configured to enable perception of multiple online personas in an instant messaging communications session, the medium or signal comprising one or more code segments configured to

identify at least two identities within a communications environment to whom messages may be directed; and

enable a first persona of a user to be projected to a first of the identities while enabling a second persona of the same user to be concurrently projected to a second of the identities,

wherein:

the first and second personas each comprise an avatar capable of being animated, and  
the first persona and the second persona differ.

13. (Withdrawn) The medium of claim 12 wherein the first persona differs from the second persona such that first persona invokes a different avatar than an avatar invoked by the second persona.

14. (Withdrawn) The medium of claim 12 wherein:

the first persona invokes a first avatar,

the second persona invokes a second avatar,

the first avatar and the second avatar are the same avatar, and

an animation associated with the first avatar is different from animations associated with the second avatar.

15. (Withdrawn) The medium of claim 12 wherein:  
the first persona invokes a first avatar,  
the second persona invokes a second avatar,  
the first avatar and the second avatar are the same avatar, and  
an appearance associated with the first avatar is different from appearances associated with the second avatar.

16. (Withdrawn) The medium of claim 12 wherein at least one of the avatars comprises an avatar capable of being animated based on text of a message sent in the instant message communications session.

17. (Withdrawn) The medium of claim 12 wherein at least one of the avatars comprises an avatar capable of being animated to send an out-of-band communication.

18. (Withdrawn) A system for enabling perception of multiple online personas in an instant messaging communications session, the system comprising a processor connected to a storage device and one or more input/output devices, wherein the processor is configured to:  
identify at least two identities within a communications environment to whom messages may be directed; and  
enable a first persona of a user to be projected to a first of the identities while enabling a second persona of the same user to be concurrently projected to a second of the identities,  
wherein:  
the first and second personas each comprise an avatar capable of being animated, and  
the first persona and the second persona differ.

19. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 18 wherein the first persona differs from the second persona such that first persona invokes a different avatar than an avatar invoked by the second persona.

20. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 18 wherein:  
the first persona invokes a first avatar,  
the second persona invokes a second avatar,  
the first avatar and the second avatar are the same avatar, and  
an animation associated with the first avatar is different from animations associated with the second avatar.

21. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 18 wherein:  
the first persona invokes a first avatar,  
the second persona invokes a second avatar,  
the first avatar and the second avatar are the same avatar, and  
an appearance associated with the first avatar is different from appearances associated with the second avatar.

22. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 18 wherein at least one of the avatars comprises an avatar capable of being animated persona based on text of a message sent in the instant message communications session.

23. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 18 wherein at least one of the avatars comprises an avatar capable of being animated to send an out-of-band communication.

24. (Withdrawn) A system for enabling perception of multiple online personas in an instant messaging communications session, the system comprising:

means to identify at least two identities within a communications environment to whom messages may be directed; and

means to enable a first persona of a user to be projected to a first of the identities while enabling a second persona of the same user to be concurrently projected to a second of the identities,

wherein:

the first and second personas each comprise an avatar capable of being animated, and the first persona and the second persona differ.

25. (Original) A computer-implemented method for enabling perception of multiple online personas in an instant messaging communications session, the method comprising:

rendering, on an instant messaging recipient system, an instant messaging application user interface for an instant messaging communications session involving at least one potential instant messaging recipient and a single potential instant messaging sender;

sending a message that includes a text message and a persona selected among multiple possible personas associated with the instant messaging sender to be displayed by the potential instant messaging recipient when displaying the text message, the selected persona comprising a collection of one or more self-expression items and a sender avatar capable of being animated; and

rendering the selected persona at the potential instant messaging recipient system when rendering another portion of the message.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the sender persona is selected by the instant messaging sender from the multiple possible personas associated with the instant messaging sender.

27. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the persona is rendered before communications are initiated by the potential instant messaging sender.

28. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the persona is rendered after communications are initiated by the potential instant messaging sender.

29. (Original) The method of claim 25 in which self-expression items comprise one or more of a wallpaper, an emoticon, and a sound.

30. (Original) The method of claim 25 further comprising defining one or more personas.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30 further comprising:  
assigning a first persona to a first potential instant messaging recipient so that the first persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected, in an instant messaging communications session involving the first potential instant messaging recipient; and  
assigning a second persona to a second potential instant messaging recipient so that the second persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected, in an instant messaging communications session involving the second potential instant messaging recipient, wherein the second persona is at least partially distinguishable from the first persona.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31 further comprising:  
assigning a first persona to a first group of potential instant messaging recipients so that the first persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected in an instant messaging communications session involving a member of the first group of potential instant messaging recipients; and  
assigning a second persona to a second potential instant messaging recipient so that the second persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected, in an instant messaging communications session involving the second potential instant messaging recipient, wherein the second persona is at least partially distinguishable from the first persona.

33. (Original) The method of claim 25 further comprising disabling use of one of the multiple personas.

34. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein disabling use of one of the multiple personas comprises disabling use of one of the multiple personas based on the instant messaging recipient.

35. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein:  
one of the multiple personas comprise a work persona associated with presence of the instant messaging sender at a work location associated with the instant messaging sender, and  
one of the multiple personas comprise a home persona associated with presence of the instant messaging sender at home,  
the method further comprising:  
determining whether the instant messaging sender is at home or at the work location;  
in response to a determination that the instant messaging sender is at home, selecting the home persona for use in the instant messaging communications session; and  
in response to a determination that the instant messaging sender is at the work location, selecting the work persona for use in the instant messaging communications session.

36. (Original) The method of claim 25 further comprising selecting a persona to be displayed by the potential instant messaging recipient based on time of day.

37. (Original) The method of claim 25 further comprising selecting a persona to be displayed by the potential instant messaging recipient based on day of week.

38. (Original) The method of claim 25 further comprising selecting a persona to be displayed by the potential instant messaging recipient based on a group of potential instant



messaging recipients that are associated with the potential instant messaging recipient.

39. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein at least some of characteristics of a persona may be transparent to the instant messaging sender.

40. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein the sender avatar is animated to send an out-of-band communication from the instant messaging sender to the potential instant messaging recipient.

41. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the out-of-band communication comprises a communication indicating an environmental condition associated with the instant messaging sender.

42. (Original) The method of claim 41 wherein the environmental condition comprises an environmental condition related to weather occurring in a geographic location near the instant messaging sender.

43. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the out-of-band communication comprises a communication indicating a personality characteristic associated with the instant messaging sender.

44. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the out-of-band communication comprises a communication indicating an emotional state associated with the instant messaging sender.

45. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the out-of-band communication comprises a communication indicating a setting characteristic associated with the instant messaging sender.

46. (Original) The method of claim 45 wherein the setting characteristic comprises a characteristic related to time of day of the instant messaging sender.

47. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the setting characteristic comprises a characteristic related to time of year.

48. (Original) The method of claim 47 wherein the time of year comprises a holiday.

49. (Original) The method of claim 47 wherein the time of year comprises a season wherein the season is one of spring, summer, fall or winter.

50. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the setting characteristic comprises a characteristic associated with a work setting.

51. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the setting characteristic comprises a characteristic associated with a recreation setting.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51 wherein the recreation setting comprises a beach setting or a tropical setting.

53. (Original) The method of claim 52 wherein the recreation setting comprises a winter sport setting.

54. – 79. (Cancelled)

80. (New) A computer-implemented method for enabling perception of multiple online personas in an instant messaging communications session, the method comprising:

- receiving, from an instant messaging sender, multiple different personas associated with the instant messaging sender, each of the personas comprising a collection of self-expression items reflecting preferences of the sender and a sender avatar capable of being animated;
- storing the multiple personas in one or more data structures;
- storing, for each of the multiple personas, an association between the persona and at least one potential instant messaging recipient;
- initiating an instant messaging communications session between the instant messaging sender and a particular potential instant messaging recipient;
- accessing the stored association between the persona and the particular potential instant messaging recipient;
- selecting, based on the accessed association, one of the multiple personas associated with the instant messaging sender; and
- rendering, on an instant messaging recipient system, the selected persona.

81. (New) The method of claim 80 wherein the multiple personas are associated with a single screen name of the instant messaging sender.

82. (New) The method of claim 80 wherein the multiple personas received are modified personas.

83. (New) The method of claim 80 wherein the self-expression items comprise one or more of a wallpaper, an emoticon, and a sound.